

**REMARKS**

In the Office Action mailed August 15, 2003, the Examiner rejected all pending claims 1-27. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the following Remarks.

**A. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102**

Claims 1-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,554,940 (the "Hubacher reference"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner points to Figure 10 and the associated text of the Hubacher reference in support of the argument that Hubacher anticipates claims 1, 9, 14, and 12. Applicant submits that the Hubacher reference does not include each and every element of the pending claims. For example, the Hubacher reference does not include a die assembly method wherein "a portion of the conductive path is formed on the die outside of the active portion of the die" as recited in the various independent claims. The Examiner notes that Hubacher discloses a conductive path at Figure 10, item number 36. However, this conductive path is within the active region of the die, not outside the active region. Consider Figure 11, which depicts a cross-sectional view of the the various multilevel connections beneath pad 28.

An advantage of the present invention relates to the fact that the conductive path between the test pad and the input pad can be separated (e.g., by laser-trimming) such that there is no danger of damaging the underlying circuitry -- particularly any multi-layer metallization. The system disclosed by Hubacher in Fig. 10 does not address this problem. Indeed, if the conductive path 36 of Fig. 10 were to be cut, there would be a significant risk of damaging the other circuitry underlying the bond pads. This is because conductive path 36 is entirely within the active region of the die.

In accordance with the above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 102 rejections be withdrawn.

**F. Conclusion**

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submitted that the foregoing remarks fully address the Examiner's objections, and that all of the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, are patentable over the art of record, and are in condition for allowance.

A Notice of Allowance respecting all pending claims is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner wish to discuss any of the above in greater detail, then the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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